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Message Text

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43
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
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O 231437Z SEP 76
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3197
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S E C R E T TEL AVIV 6594

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2
TAGS: PINR, IS, EG
SUBJECT: PUBLICITY ON INTELLIGENCE OFFICIALS MEETING

REFS: (A) STATE 227801; (B) TEL AVIV 6295

1. IN RESPONSE TO GENERAL GAZIT'S REQUEST FOR A SUGGESTED PRESS RELEASE, DATT PASSED TO IDF INTELLIGENCE SEPTEMBER 22 THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:
"EARLIER THIS WEEK TWO UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE EXPERTS VISITED ISRAEL AND HELD A SERIES OF TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS WITH ISRAELI DEFENSE OFFICIALS REGARDING THE METHODOLOGY OF INTERPRETING AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY. THIS VISIT TOOK PLACE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES WHICH THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAS ASSUMED FOR AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY UNDER THE SINAI AGREEMENT AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE AGREEMENT REACHED AT GENEVA BETWEEN ISRAEL, EGYPT AND THE UNITED NATIONS. BOTH SIDES AGREED THAT THE DISCUSSIONS WERE VERY USEFUL."

2. THE FOLLOWING POINTS WERE MADE ORALLY:
A. WE PREFER THAT RELEASE BE MADE AFTER TEAM DEPARTS ON FRIDAY.
B. WE DO NOT PLAN TO ISSUE A STATEMENT; HOWEVER, IF ASKED, WE WILL SAY WE CONCUR IN THE STATEMENT RELEASED BY THE ISRAELIS, PROVIDED STATEMENT IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ABOVE.
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3. LATER IN DAY ON SEPTEMBER 22 DATT RECEIVED A PHONE CALL FROM THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS (IDF INTELLIGENCE), WHO SAID THAT:
A. "DUE TO PRESS AND RADIO STORIES ALREADY CIRCULATING THE IDF SPOKESMAN WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO DELAY COMMENT UNTIL FRIDAY;
B. "THE IDF DID NOT PLAN TO MAKE A FORMAL DECLARATION;
C. "IF ASKED, THE SPOKESMAN PLANS TO SAY THAT MEETINGS WERE HELD TO DISCUSS METHODOLOGY OF PHOTO INTERPRETATION AND THAT THE MEETINGS WERE USEFUL."

4. WE WERE INFORMED BY THIS SAME OFFICE ON SEPTEMBER 23 THAT NO QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN ASKED AND NO STATEMENT HAS BEEN MADE.

5. THE FOLLOWING REPORT, HEADLINED "AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS CAME TO DECIPHER AIR PHOTOS", WAS PUBLISHED BY MAARIV SEPTEMBER 22. (A SIMILAR ARTICLE APPEARED IN AL HAMISHMAR SEPTEMBER 23 AND A SHORT RADIO REPORT DEALT WITH THE SUBJECT IN SIMILAR FASHION SEPTEMBER 22).:
"AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS, EXPERTS IN DECIPHERING AIR PHOTOS, ARRIVED IN ISRAEL TO DECIPHER THE PICTURES TAKEN BY THE U.S., OVER THE THINOUT AREA IN SINAI. ISRAELI AIR FORCE OFFICERS INTERPRETED THE PICTURES TOGETHER WITH THEM.

7. "AT LEAST TWO OF THE U.S. OFFICERS ARRIVED SEVERAL DAYS AGO, AND HAVE ALREADY HAD SEVERAL PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS WITH THEIR ISRAELI COLLEAGUES.

8. "THE JOINT TEAM STUDIES PHOTOS TAKEN SEVERAL DAYS AGO IN ORDER TO DETERMINE IF THE EGYPTIANS ARE VIOLATING THE AGREEMENT, AND TO WHAT DEGREE THE GYPTIAN FORCE IS LARGER THAN SET OUT BY THE AGREEMENT.

9 "ISRAELI AUTHORITIES REFUSED TO CONFIRM THE PRESENCE OF THE U.S. INTERPRETERS. AS IS KNOWN, THE U.S. ASKED THAT THE MATTER NOT BE PUBLICIZED. THE AMERICANS WERE SEEN THIS WEEK IN TEL AVIV IN THE COMPANY OF THEIR
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ISRAELI COLLEAGUES.

10. "THE U.S. NOW TRANSMITS ONLY PHOTOS TO ISRAEL AND EGYPT, WITHOUT DECIPHERING OR NOTING THEIR SIGNIFICANCE.

11. "AS WILL BE RECALLED, THERE WAS RECENTLY AN ARGUMENT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE U.S. OVER THE LAST DECIPHERING DONE BY THE AMERICANS. ISRAEL EXPERTS CLAIMED THAT

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DESPITE THE CLOUDS WHICH INTERFERED WITH THE PHOTOS, THE
ADDITIONAL UNITS WHICH THE EGYPTIANS HAD BROUGHT IN--
IN ADDITION TO THOSE NOTED BY THE AMERICANS -- WERE
DISCERNIBLE."
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